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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PRETORIA 000468

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SUBJECT: PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE PROVIDES FURTHER
AMMUNITION AGAINST SCORPIONS

REF: A. CAPE TOWN 38

- [1](#)B. PRETORIA 306
- [1](#)C. PRETORIA XXX
- [1](#)D. 07 PRETORIA 1090

PRETORIA 00000468 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Donald Teitelbaum. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: In yet another blow to the embattled Directorate of Special Operations, also known as the Scorpions, the parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence (JSCI) has released a report that criticizes the Scorpions for intelligence gathering, among other things, and for putting South Africa's young democracy at risk (Ref A&B). Though the JSCI has no oversight authority over the Scorpions, it urges the executive to take action against those responsible for the compilation of the "Special Browse Mole Report," which accused then-ANC Deputy President Jacob Zuma of receiving support from foreign governments. The ANC immediately seized on the JSCI's findings, with ANC leaders and MPs publicly and privately calling on government to take immediate action. END SUMMARY.

PARLIAMENT LEADERS BRIEFED ON JSCI REPORT

[1](#)2. (C) On 26 February, Independent Democrats (ID) Leader Patricia de Lille informed EmbOffs that the Speaker of Parliament (and ANC Chairperson), Baleka Mbete, had just briefed her and other parliamentary leaders on the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence's (JSCI) unfavorable findings of the Scorpions and their "Special Browse Mole Report," which summarized intelligence reports about then ANC-Deputy President Jacob Zuma's support base and fund-raising activities. De Lille (please protect) gave EmbOffs a photocopy of the JSCI report, which is dated 27 November 2007, noting it was the first time a JSCI report had been released. De Lille believes Mbete's brief and the release of the report clearly show the Zuma camp is in charge of Parliament. She is certain the report will be used as ammunition to disband the Scorpions and is concerned over the use of state institutions to fight political battles (Ref C).

BACKGROUND OF THE BROWSE MOLE REPORT

¶3. (C) In 2006, the Scorpions produced a "Top Secret" document known as the "Special Browse Mole Consolidated Report." The report's origins, authors, purpose, and ultimate audience remain unknown, despite months of controversy following its leak in May 2007. The document begins with the accusation that then-ANC Deputy President Jacob Zuma's "presidential ambitions (were) fueled and sustained by a conspiracy playing out both inside South Africa and on the African continental stage....the (South African Communist Party (SACP), Congress of South African Trade Unions, and ANC and SACP Youth Leagues) seemingly disaffected with Mbeki have thrown in their lot with the former Deputy President." The report goes on to say that, "there exist elements within the Security and Intelligence Services that appear to be considering the subversion of the apparatus of State in support of a Zuma presidency."

¶4. (C) The document also alleges that "several Heads of State and leaders of African politico/military groupings, apparently alienated by South Africa's perceived pre-eminence in the African Union and especially in NEPAD," to be Zuma Q in the African Union and especially in NEPAD," to be Zuma supporters. In some cases, "these political leaders appear to pose a threat to the sovereignty and integrity of the South African State." The document specifically names both Angolan President Dos Santos and Libyan Leader Muammar Qadhafi, who is alleged to have given \$3-5 million to Zuma through SACP Secretary General Blade Nzimande for the promotion of a "street level revolution in South Africa." The document concludes by asking for authorization to launch a preparatory investigation into money laundering, tax evasion, contravention of exchange control regulations, and conspiracy to sedition.

JSCI Findings

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¶5. (C) The JSCI did not conduct a primary investigation of the Scorpions or the Browse Mole Report, but based much of its findings on the results of the National Security Council's Task Team, which was established on 30 May 2007 by President Mbeki. According to the JSCI report, the Task Team (which included the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), the South African Secret Service, and the South African Police Service (SAPS)) concluded that the Scorpions had fallen prey to "information peddlers," referring to a network of apartheid-era officers, most of whom worked in covert intelligence structures, who continue to have links to foreign intelligence services in the UK, Germany, France, and the U.S. These "peddlers," according to the Task Team, are not driven by ideology, but by access to state resources and contracts. The Task Team concluded that the Scorpions had been involved in intelligence collection for which they do not have the competency, experience, or mandate.

¶6. (C) The conclusions drawn by the JSCI in its report, however, were harsher and more conspiratorial than the above circumstances might suggest. They characterized the Scorpions' actions as "dangerous, inflammatory, divisive, and having the potential to throw (South Africa's) new democracy into chaos." The JSCI believes that the Browse Mole Report's purpose was primarily to gather information on Zuma and noted that the Scorpions were reluctant to cooperate with the Task Team. (NOTE: Leonard McCarthy, head of the Scorpions, has stated that the Browse Mole Report was not a product of an authorized investigation but an informal gathering of information. END NOTE) The JSCI, like the Task Team, believes that the Scorpions continue to conduct intelligence operations, contrary to the law. However, unlike the Task Team, the JSCI is of the opinion that the "information peddlers" cited in the report were, like other African

leaders, intent on destabilizing and subverting South Africa and Mbeki's efforts to bring peace and stability to the continent.

17. (C) The JSCI report recommended that:

-- the executive authority take appropriate action against Leonard McCarthy and all other officials involved;

-- the "government" must direct the Scorpions to stop intelligence gathering activities immediately;

-- NIA expedite the vetting of Scorpions' officials and regulation of private intelligence gathering activities;

-- a comprehensive review of the Scorpions be undertaken.

ANC RESPONSE

18. (C) The 29 February edition of ANC Today, the ruling party's on-line newsletter, leads with "Browse Mole Report: Democracy must be defended against 'dirty tricks'." In addition to summarizing the JSCI report, it urges party members to remain "vigilant...and not to be complacent about the activities of old-style intelligence networks aiming to sow division and cause confusion within our young democracy."

According to press reports, ANC MPs expressed their anger during a parliamentary caucus meeting on 28 February over the government's delay in taking disciplinary action against McCarthy. ANC Secretary General Gwede Mantashe is reported to have instructed during the same meeting the chairperson of Qto have instructed during the same meeting the chairperson of the Committee on Safety and Security to read a statement during the next National Assembly sitting urging the government to take action against the Scorpions. The ANC also has dispatched National Assembly Chief Whip Nathi Mthethwa to meet with Justice Minister Brigitte Mabandla sometime this week to find out more about the delay. Numerous press reports have noted that McCarthy will resign from the NPA before June, though the NPA Spokesperson has denied this.

COMMENT

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19. (C) It is often difficult to untangle facts from conspiracies in post-apartheid South Africa. Some of the information included in the Browse Mole Report rings true, such as Zuma's strong support base within COSATU, SACP, and the Youth Leagues. Other parts appear outlandish, such as continental leaders' jealousy over Mbeki's "perceived pre-eminence in NEPAD," a largely ineffectual organization that could easily die after Mbeki leaves office next year. Consequently, the Browse Mole Report itself appears to be one more example of political infighting within the ANC being played out in the security services, as was the case with the hoax email scandal (Ref D).

110. (C) However, unlike the hoax email scandal -- which was proven to be a manufactured scandal -- the fact that both the government Task Team and the JSCI found the Scorpions guilty of intelligence gathering against Zuma provides further ammunition for Zuma's camp to argue that the Scorpions operate without bounds, are politically motivated, and therefore should be disbanded. The Speaker's briefing to Parliamentary leaders, the ANC Secretary General's insistence on a public statement from a parliamentary committee head, and the call on the Justice Minister three months after the report's issuance clearly indicate that the Zuma camp sees this report as a useful tool in its push to disband the

Scorpions.
TEITELBAUM